

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 024577

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: XF, US, YO, PLO

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT CARTER'S REPLY TO TITO LETTER ON
ARAFAT VISIT

REF: BELGRADE 158

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S JANUARY 26
REPLY TO PRESIDENT TITO'S MESSAGE (REFTEL). YOU ARE
AUTHORIZED TO DELIVER THIS MESSAGE NOW. SIGNED ORIGINAL
BEING FORWARDED BY POUCH. QUOTE: DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:
I GREATLY APPRECIATED RECEIVING YOUR THOUGHTFUL MESSAGE
OF JANUARY 10, 1978, ABOUT THE EVOLVING MIDDLE EAST SITUA-
TION AND THE IMPORTANCE OF A RESOLUTION OF THE PALESTINIAN
ISSUE. NO FOREIGN POLICY QUESTION HAS OCCUPIED A HIGHER
PLACE ON MY AGENDA THAN THE TASK OF ASSISTING THE PARTIES
TO THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT TO MOVE TOWARD PEACE. I AM
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GRATEFUL FOR YOUR KIND WORDS FOR THE ROLE WHICH THE U.S.
HAS BEEN PLAYING IN THIS REGARD.

2. ONE ASPECT OF YOUR ADVICE TO YASIR ARAFAT STOOD OUT IN
MY MIND AS I READ YOUR MESSAGE. THIS WAS YOUR ADMONITION
TO HIM THAT THE ONLY MEANS OF REACHING A PEACEFUL SETTLE-
MENT OF THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE IS TO PROCEED ON THE BASIS

OF PROPOSALS WHICH ALREADY HAVE BEEN INTERNATIONALLY

ACCEPTED. THIS IS CERTAINLY SOUND ADVICE.

I CAN UNDERSTAND THE REASONS BEHIND YOUR SUGGESTION THAT THE CAUSE OF PEACE WOULD BE SERVED BY THE OPENING OF DIRECT CONTACT BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND LEADING PLO PERSONALITIES. OUR POSITION, HOWEVER, HAS NOT CHANGED. WE WILL NOT TALK WITH THE PLO UNLESS IT RECOGNIZES THE RIGHT OF ALL STATES IN THE AREA TO LIVE IN PEACE WITHIN SECURE AND RECOGNIZED BORDERS, AND ACCEPTS SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 338 AS THE AGREED FRAMEWORK TO PEACE NEGOTIATIONS.

I ASSURE YOU, MR. PRESIDENT, THAT WE WILL NOT IGNORE OR EVADE THE CENTRAL PALESTINIAN ISSUE AS WE TRY TO MOVE TOWARD A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE SETTLEMENT. LIKE YOU, AND LIKE PRESIDENT SADAT, I REGARD THIS AS ONE OF THE CORE ISSUES.

AS I SAID AT ASWAN FOLLOWING MY MEETING WITH PRESIDENT SADAT, THERE MUST BE A RESOLUTION OF THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM IN ALL ITS ASPECTS. I MEAN BY THIS THAT A RESOLUTION MUST RECOGNIZE THE LEGITIMATE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND ENABLE THE PALESTINIANS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DETERMINATION OF THEIR OWN FUTURE. FOR OUR OWN

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PART, WE WOULD PREFER TO SEE THE PALESTINIAN IDENTITY ACHIEVED THROUGH SOME FORM OF ASSOCIATION OF A PALESTINIAN HOMELAND WITH JORDAN, BUT WE REMAIN OPEN-MINDED AND WILL BE GUIDED BY THE VIEWS OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT, INCLUDING THOSE OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE.

I HOPE THAT YOU WILL CONTINUE TO SHARE WITH ME YOUR THOUGHTS AND SUGGESTIONS. YOUR WIDE EXPERIENCE AND YOUR CLOSE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LEADERS AND THE TRENDS IN THE MIDDLE EAST MAKE YOUR VIEWS PARTICULARLY VALUABLE TO ME.

I ESPECIALLY LOOK FORWARD TO THE OPPORTUNITY TO TALK WITH YOU FURTHER ON THESE AND OTHER ISSUES WHEN YOU COME TO WASHINGTON IN MARCH.

SINCERELY, JIMMY CARTER.

HIS EXCELLENCY MARSHAL JOSIP BROZ TITO, PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIALIST FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA, BELGRADE.
END QUOTE.

THERE IS ALSO A MESSAGE DIRECTLY UNDER PRESIDENT CARTER'S SIGNATURE IN HIS HANDWRITING: QUOTE BEST WISHES. J.C.

UNQUOTE.

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